BUDDHISM

IN RELATION TO

CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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WITH SPEECHES BY MR. HORMUZD RASSAM, PROFESSOR LEITNER, PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS, REV. S. COLES, LATE OF CEYLON, &c.

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SPEAKING some time since at a meeting, I ventured to use as illustrations one or two of the more striking stories in the *Jātakas*, or tales of the 550 births of Buddha. A layman, who succeeded me, observed that, had I had time, I might have told the audience that Buddhism was a religion long antecedent to Christianity; and that many of the moral teachings, of which we had previously believed that they belonged to Christianity alone, had been already enunciated by Buddha.

2. This one fact, that Buddha preceded Christ, has been popularly allowed to override every other consideration in comparing Buddhism and Christianity. And the question has readily followed, If Buddha six centuries* before the

*** This Essay was written, by special request. The Author's careful study of the history of Buddhism, more particularly in Ceylon, where he was Principal of a College during a long series of years, having marked him out as fitted to deal thoroughly with the subject.—THE EDITOR.

* According to the Ceylon books, the date of Gautama Buddha's birth was 623 B.C. This date, however, is not absolutely verified, and it may ultimately prove to be somewhat too early.

Christian era taught so much of what we have called Christian ethics, is Christianity original? And may not Christ and his followers have been indebted to Buddhistic teaching?

3. One recent writer has been so far under the influence of this suggestion, that he endeavours to trace the Pauline doctrine, and especially the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, through the Essenic channel up to Gautama Buddha, though there is really no valid proof that the Essenes were in any degree indebted to Buddhism. It is, in fact, easier to show the probability of the influence of the Christian religion in India in the early centuries of the Christian era, since which time the Buddhist literature has been penned, than the probability of the influence of Buddhism westwards before that era. There is no really historical evidence of the name, for instance, of Buddha himself having travelled westwards before the time of Clemens Alexandrinus in the third century: he is the first to mention the name of Buddha in these words:—"Some, too, of the Indians obey the precepts of *Boutta*, whom, on account of his extraordinary sanctity, they have raised to divine honours."* His information was, no doubt, in a great measure derived from Pantænus, whose pupil and successor he was; but he is also indebted to as early a writer as Megasthenes, who was in India, and wrote his *Indica*, about 300 B.C. Bardesanes, of Edessa, in the second century A.D., as quoted by Porphyry,† refers probably to the Buddhists, but in a very cursory manner, as of something very distant, and not giving any information as to Buddhist doctrines. The distinctive characteristics of Buddhism are wanting in all other early descriptions of Indian philosophies that are usually quoted. Between the time of Clemens and Megasthenes there is no reliable evidence of any influence exerted by Buddhism in the West, and only the most meagre hints of even the knowledge of the fact that such a religion existed. With regard to Megasthenes himself, from whom most subsequent writers seem to have borrowed, like Clemens, when writing on the philosophies of the Indians, it is extremely doubtful whether he even alludes to Buddhism at all. His *Sarmanæ*, which have been connected with the Buddhist monks, or by some with the Jains, because they were called *Sramana*, were not necessarily Buddhists, or even Jains. The *Hylobii* (Ὑλόβιοι) among them (so called by Megasthenes) who dwelt in the forests,

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* Clemens, *Stromata*, i. 15. † Porphyry, *De Abstinentiâ*, iv. 17.

are described as living on leaves and fruit, which the Buddhists never did, but on alms. The *Hylobii* were, doubtless, as the name implies, the *Vāna-prasthas*, who were Brahman ascetics. The word *Sramana* was not invented by the Buddhists, but was applied to ascetics long before the time of Buddha. Indeed, the very term *Gymnosophists*, under which Clemens classes "the *Sarmanæ* and other Brahmans," excludes the Buddhists, who not only did not go about *in puris naturalibus*, as some of the *Vāna-prasthas*, or *Sanyāsis*, did, and still do, but clothed themselves from head to foot, as a very essential part of their religion.

4. The asceticism and love of righteousness of the Essenes were not necessarily derived from Buddha. The love of righteousness was equally prominent in the time of Job, who lived probably 1,500 years before Buddha; and asceticism seems to be due to the idiosyncrasies of individual men in all races rather than to mere sectarianism, and would appear always to have arisen as the human protest of purity against the greed and licentiousness of the world. The doctrines of the Essenes and of the Gnostics also connect them rather with Greece and Persia than with India. The really peculiar marks of Buddhism, such as the doctrine of the *non-ego*, and the transmission through successive births of the *Kamma* or *Karma*, if they were parts of early Buddhism, are certainly not reproduced among either Essenes or Gnostics. And, even could it be proved that the Essenes were indebted to Buddhism, we should claim much better evidence than Mr. Bunsen produces, before we could allow, notwithstanding the suspicion of Eusebius, that they themselves influenced the Christian story as found in the New Testament.

5. According to this writer, even John the Baptist also was a half-Buddhist, because, among other reasons, Bethabara, where he is said to have been born, may perhaps, Mr. Bunsen says, be a misprint for "*Betharaba*," which may have been a place on the west coast of the Dead Sea, where the elder Pliny says the Essenic body had their chief settlements. Moreover, "John the Baptist is only another name for John the Ashai or bather, from which the name of the Essai may now be safely assumed to be derived."* Add to this that "John was a Gnostic, which word has the same meaning as Buddhist," and the evidence is assumed to be complete that

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* The common derivation of Ἐσσῆνοι or Ἔσσαῖοι, is Heb. *âsâ*, Chald. *âsayâ*, "to heal," because the Essenes were *physicians*.

John the Baptist inherited Buddhistic lore.* These seem to me to be gratuitous assumptions of the most ghost-like consistency.

6. Another assumption of the same author is that the peculiar name which Gautama Buddha so often applies to himself, *Tathāgata*,† means "he that should come." It is difficult to see how the word, mysterious though it may be, can be twisted to such a meaning. Dr. Oldenberg translates the same word by "the perfect one." There is, at all events, not much in common between the two ideas; but, whatever be the real import of *Tathāgata* (literally, *such a one*, or, *having arrived at such a state or condition*), our author paraphrases it, to assimilate it to the phraseology of the New Testament, by certain words of John the Baptist, or, as he calls him, the Essene; and, in accordance with this translation of the name, he speaks of the owner of it as the *Christ* of the Buddhists. He asserts that the Hindus, 600 years before the Christian era, were in possession of prophecies of a coming Messiah, and that they recognised the fulfilment in Gautama Buddha. Thus he says:—"Gautama Buddha, the preacher of a 'tradition from beyond,' from a supermundane world, was regarded as one of the incarnations of the first of seven Archangels, of Serosh, the Vicar of God, and the first among the co-creators of the universe." All this would be extremely curious could a single passage be found in the Pâli texts to show that the early Buddhists regarded the founder of their sect as the incarnation of any one. An incarnation in this sense is foreign to the character of early Buddhism altogether, and certainly is not consonant to the Buddhistic doctrines as to the *Kamma*, or *Karma*, in relation to successive births. Nor can it be shown that the Buddhists knew anything of "Serosh, the Vicar of God, and the first among the co-creators of the universe." Nor is there any real proof of so intimate a connexion between Buddhism and Parsism in doctrine, as Mr. Bunsen postulates. Indeed, the very translation of *pāramita* by "tradition from beyond" is an illustration of how Mr. Bunsen likes to bring distant analogies too near, if they only suit his purpose. The Sanscrit *pāramita* is, no doubt, analogous in its derivation to the Latin word *traditio*; but the meaning of a word is determined by its usage, and not merely by its derivation, and *pāramita* was

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* Bunsen's *Angel-Messiah*, pp. 148 *et seq.*, and 343.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 18 and 341.

used to indicate the *transcendent*, not the *traditional*. The *pāramitas* were the *virtues* practised by the Bodhisat, so called because they were held to be *transcendent*, or perfections.

7. By false and superficial reasoning of the kind I have mentioned,—and further instances might be very greatly multiplied, as that Buddha was born of a virgin, of which no thought is breathed in the early notices of his birth: that there is some mysterious connexion between the name of his mother Maya, and the name of Mary, the mother of Jesus: that, as Burnouf states, the elements of the legend of Christ are to be found even in the Vedas, and that the Vedic *Agni* is to be identified with the Christian *Agnus*: that Christ himself travelled to the far East, a pure assumption: that the doctrine of a Messiah can be shown to have been introduced into Judaism from the East, which it cannot: that the birth of Buddha was attended by miracles, which is an addition to the story in after ages: that Buddha taught the great doctrine of "vicarious suffering," of which there is nothing in the first accounts of his teaching: that Buddha was born, like Christ, on the "Sun's annual birthday," December 25th, which cannot be proved either in the case of Buddha or Christ; that ancient prophecies were afloat marking that particular time as the birth-date of an expected Messiah, which statement is entirely without foundation; and by many other equally groundless statements,—a glamour has been thrown over the history of Buddhism which intrinsically it does not possess; and it is to be feared that not a few minds have thereby been greatly perplexed between the relative claims of Buddhism and Christianity. That Christianity has only been shining by borrowed light from India and Irania is a theory which will not bear accurate investigation.

8. But I do not propose to approach this subject further to-night in the way of destructive criticism, though I have ventured to give one or two instances of the kind of argument one meets with. But within the compass of this short paper I prefer now to draw attention to some of the facts of history and tendencies of the human mind, which may, I think, prove to be safe guides in our investigations as to what Buddhism really is in its relation—if it have any relation properly so-called—to Christianity.

9. And now let us look more carefully at some of the analogies that exist, or are said to exist, between Christianity and Buddhism. They are of two distinct kinds: first, there is the morality of Buddhism, often of extreme beauty; and

secondly, there are the accounts of the person and character of Buddha himself. In regard to each of these we can find, or imagine, certain parallels in either the Old or the New Testament. What do these parallels mean?

10. Let us take the second class of parallels first, those which relate to the persons and characters of Buddha and Jesus Christ. Take, as a prominent instance, the birth stories. I need not here give details, which are to be found in any modern work on Buddhism. The supposed miraculous conception; the bringing down of Buddha from the Tūsita heaven; the Dēvas acknowledging his supremacy; the presentation in the Temple, when the images of Indra and other gods threw themselves at his feet; the temptation by Māra,—which legends are embellished by the modern writer I have already quoted, under such phrases as, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost," "Born of the Virgin Maya," "Song of the heavenly host," "Presentation in the Temple and temptation in the wilderness,"—none of these are found in the early Pâli texts. The simple story of ancient Buddhism is that an ascetic, whose family name was Gautama, preached a new doctrine of human suffering, and a new way of deliverance from it. The surrounding of Buddha with the attributes of divinity is an exaltation of his person by the later Buddhist writers, which is entirely foreign to the earliest elements of his history as gleaned from the Pâli texts. To write a consecutive history of his life at all was an after-thought. The earliest Buddhist writings relate his teachings, with only cursory intimations as to his personal history. From them we glean that he was the son of Suddhodana, who was a king residing at Kapilavatthu; whether a ruler over extended territory, or only what would now be called in India a "petty rajah," may be left doubtful. Surrounded from his infancy with some amount of wealth and luxury, as he afterwards told his disciples, this intellectual youth,—for such he must have been in an eminent degree,—was led to reflect on sickness, decay, and death; and while he thus reflected in his mind, "all that buoyancy of youth which dwells in the young, all that spirit of life which dwells in life, sank within him." Though he was married, yet at twenty-nine years of age he left his home to become an ascetic. This was no unusual course; and he sought two other Brahman ascetics to be his teachers. Dissatisfied, however, with their teaching, he travelled to Uruvelâ, or Buddha Gayâ, near Patna, where he spent, it is said, seven years in discipline, meditation, and study. How far that study embraced what might be the tradition of the past we have no means of certainly knowing;

but he is said to have been determined to be a "follower of the Buddhas of bygone ages"; and that may mean, that during his years of seclusion he had the means of canvassing the teaching of some of the leaders of mankind, who had gone before him. There is nothing divine in all this; nor is anything claimed for him beyond the actions of an earnest ascetic. What there was of the divine in his mission was, according to the Mahāvagga, external to himself. It is remarkable that, though Buddhism, now at least, is atheistic, yet the supreme Brahma, called by the Buddhists Brahma Sahampati, is constantly mentioned, even in the oldest texts, as influencing Buddha; and when he first felt enlightenment, Brahma Sahampati is said in the Mahāvagga to have encouraged him in preaching his doctrine. May not this mean, that Buddha in the first instance claimed divine authority for his mission? And what was his mission? It was, in the main, to preach, according to his lights, much as Savonarola did in Florence, against the vices of the day. In all this there is nothing but the earnest monk preaching purity of life as the way to happiness now and hereafter. There is no thought in the early Buddhism, of which we read in the Pâli texts, of deliverance at the hands of a god; but the *man* Gautama Buddha stands alone in his striving after the true emancipation from sorrow and ignorance. The accounts of his descending from heaven, and being conceived in the world of men, when a preternatural light shone over the worlds, the blind received sight, the dumb sang, the lame danced, the sick were cured, together with all such embellishments, are certainly added by later hands; and, if here we recognise some rather remarkable likenesses in thought or expression to things familiar to us in our Bibles, we need not be astonished, when we reflect how great must have been the influence, as I have before hinted, of the Christian story in India in the early centuries of the Christian era, and perhaps long subsequently. This is a point which has been much overlooked; but it is abundantly evident from, among other proofs, the story of the god Krishna, which is a manifest parody of the history of Christ. The *Bhagavat-Gīta*, a theosophical poem put into the mouth of Krishna, is something unique among the productions of the East, containing many gems of what we should call Christian truth, wrested from their proper setting, to adorn this creation of the Brahman poet, and indicating as plainly their origin as do the stories of his life in the *Mahā Bhārata;* so that it has not unreasonably

been concluded that the story of Krishna was inserted in the *Mahā-Bhārata* to furnish a divine sanction to the *Bhagavat. Gīta.* If, then, as there is the strongest reason to believe, the Christian story, somewhere between the first and tenth centuries of the Christian era, forced itself into the great Hindu epic, and was at the foundation of the most remarkable poem that ever saw the light in India, can we be surprised if we find similarly borrowed and imitated wonders in the later Buddhist stories also?

11. The early influence of Christianity in India may have been very much greater than is generally supposed. We must not judge only by the India of our own era. Buddhism itself once held supreme sway in India, but there is not a Buddhist now to be found between the Himalayas and Cape Comorin. Cosmas Indicopleustes, in the sixth century, found Christians in Ceylon; but, though I made diligent search when in the island some years ago, I could not discover any trace or tradition of them remaining. India has been the scene in the past of great and sweeping changes. But it is to be observed that there is still on the Malabar coast a body of probably 250,000 Christians, the representatives of a Church that was undoubtedly founded by an Apostle or Apostles. This may be only a remnant of what once was a much more widely-extended influence; for, at the Mount, near Madras, there is an ancient Christian cross with a Pahlavî inscription, first deciphered by the late Dr. Burnell, that seems to belong to not later than the seventh or eighth century. There is a similar Pahlavî inscription on a cross at Kottayam, on the Malabar coast; and other crosses, with writings in the same character, were recorded by early Roman Catholic missionaries. There are also Pahlavî writings in the caves near Bombay. These Pahlavî inscriptions are to be accounted for, I believe, by the early and continued connexion between the Indian Christians and Edessa, and may indicate a very wide-spread Christian influence in the past.* When we know also

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* See *Indian Antiquary*, vol. iii., p. 308; vol. iv., pp. 153, 183, 311, &c., for fuller discussion of this subject between Dr. Burnell and myself. Pahlavî was the Court language of the Sassanian dynasty in Persia (226–651 A.D.) The authorised version of the Avesta, in use at that period, as well as contemporary inscriptions, were in Pahlavî. It is an Aramaic dialect, supposed to be a dialect of ancient Assyria. It is, therefore, the language that early Edessan and Babylonian Christians would probably bring with them to India. The traditions of the Jacobite Church on the Malabar Coast connect them in their early history with Edessa and Babylon. They even now own

that Pantænus of Alexandria found a Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew during his mission in India in the second century; that a bishop, signing himself "Metropolitan of Persia and the Great India," was present at the Council of Nicæa in 325 A.D.; and that Cosmas found Christians in India and Ceylon in the sixth century, we cannot wonder if we seem to find evidences in the later Buddhist writings, as well as in the *Mahā-Bhārata* and the *Bhagavat-Gītu*, that the Christian story was well known, at least to the learned.

12. There need be no great mystery, then, in the similarities between the personal histories of Buddha and Christ. And I would only here add that, in tracing such historical parallels, it is desirable to observe, if possible, when a story first appears,—a rule that has not always been followed by recent writers on Buddhism and Christianity. The story of the temptation of Buddha by Māra* (the Buddhist Satan) may be taken as an example. It is not contained in what is manifestly the earliest account of the entrance of Buddha upon his ministry in the Mahāvagga, the comparative antiquity of which is undoubted. M. Senart, when he

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as their ecclesiastical head the Patriarch of the Jacobite Church at Mardin, a little to the east of Orfah (the ancient Edessa). The late Bishop of the Malabar Christians, Mar Athenasius, went himself to Mardin for consecration. These Malabar Christians still retain six copper plates, on which are inscribed, in the old Tamil vernacular of the country, certain rights and privileges accorded to the Christian community; on one plate are the signatures of the witnesses, ten of which are written in Pahlavî characters, eleven in Kufic character, and four in Hebrew. This *Sasanam*, or grant, has been believed by, amongst others, Dr. Haug, Dr. E. W. West, and Dr. Burnell, on antiquarian grounds, to belong to not later than the ninth century. This is confirmed by the fact that on one of the plates is the date 36, which, if it belongs to the era at present in use in Malabar, must point to that century, the Malabar year now being 1059. Such a grant must indicate that the Christians had by that time acquired a very important status in the country. The chief Rabbi of the Jews at Cochin, on the same coast, has a similar grant on copper plates, and of no doubt the same date. The tradition, indeed, of the Jewish Colony is that their *Sasanam* was made in the fifth century. The existence of Pahlavî inscriptions on the ancient crosses and *Sasanams* of the Christians led Dr. Burnell, who was a careful student, to believe that the early Persian settlers, or missionaries, were Manichæans. There is, however, no valid evidence for the Manichæan as against the Christian theory; and if Dr. Haug's translation of the characters that surround the St. Thomas's Mount and Kottayam crosses be correct, the inscription is eminently Christian: "Who believes in the Messiah, and God above, and in the Holy Ghost, is redeemed through the grace of him who bore the cross."

* Māra, *the destroyer;* in the language of the Vedas, *death;* the Sanscrit root being *mri, to slay.*

would convert Buddha into the mythical Sun-hero, must have chosen his colours from more modern palettes, from the commentary of the "Jātaka," or even the "Pūjāwaliya," which last was probably written not before the thirteenth century of the Christian era. It is from the last source that the greater part of Spence Hardy's descriptions are drawn. Bigandet, Beal, Burnouf, and other writers on Buddhism, also draw greatly on later accounts. How far even the Pitakas themselves represent the whole truth of original Buddhism is undoubtedly problematical; for, according to the Ceylon accounts they were not committed to writing, but were only orally preserved, for nearly 500 years. And the commentaries by Buddhaghosa, so highly esteemed as exponents of Buddhist doctrine, are said on the authority of the Singhalese books themselves not to date farther back than 420 A.D.

I have, however, only just grazed the surface of this question of historical parallels. More I could not do in this paper, though it demands and would repay ample investigation.

13. I must now refer to the other class of parallels between Buddhism and Christianity,—the moral precepts of Buddha, and the moral precepts of the Christian faith. And here I feel that there is so much to be discussed, so much that is of the deepest interest, not only to the Christian, but to the historical inquirer, that I feel fairly at sea, when I have to compress what I have to say into a few sentences. I will take, therefore, only one leading thought for our consideration at present; and I take it, because it seems to me to be the only true guide to the study of what is called the science of Religion,—I mean the acknowledgment of a primitive revelation, both of morality and ritual worship, before the early families of mankind were dispersed.

14. It appears to be the fashion with writers on the science of Religion to regard man as having in his early history a mind, which was as to Religion a *tabula rasa*, on which any theory may be written that appears good to the writer. This is a question of surpassing interest at this moment, and has been brought into great prominence by Mr. Herbert Spencer's article in last month's number of the *Nineteenth Century*. It is quite relevant to the point of my argument to say a few words on this subject. The "Ghost Theory" endorsed by Mr. Spencer; the supposed indications of duality of existence, first suggested by dreams, leading up to a suspicion of external spiritual powers; the theory that such suspicions inspired our remote ancestors through their sub-

jective reasonings with some true intuitions as to the great objective reality of the "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed"; the supposition that under these growing intuitions of the unseen, men invented bloody and unbloody sacrifices and offerings, and a highly-complicated ritual, always connected in the earliest ages of which we know anything with duties to God and men; the theory that by a survival of the fittest of these intuitional religious rites and opinions men worked out the rites and the moral precepts of the Old Testament and the Christianity of the New, which last is, after all, according to Mr. Herbert Spencer, but a stepping-stone to something better;—all these theories are so difficult of verification, that one feels, even when essaying to follow the footsteps of Mr. Spencer in his most cleverly conceived arguments, how every step needs testing, and how uncertain many seem when tested. It is almost like walking over an Irish bog, where you carefully pick your steps from one verdant tuft to another with some amount of solicitude for your personal safety. The very first step of Mr. Spencer, in his *Religion, a Retrospect and a Prospect,* is questioned at once by a deaf-mute in Yorkshire, who refuses to be placed in the same category with "brutes," "children," and "lowest savages." Even the alleged intuitions of what are called savages are very difficult of verification. Mr. Spencer's very first sentence does not embrace the whole truth,—"The religious consciousness" is not "concerned only with the unseen," but is also concerned with historical facts, such, for instance, as the miracles of Christ and the Mosaic Dispensation.

But I am not here to discuss this celebrated *Nineteenth Century* article, and only wish at present to observe how much simpler is the theory, if you like so to call it (though we hold it to be no theory), and how much more capable of verification at every step, and on that ground alone more scientific,—the theory of revelation from an infinite and personal energy, whom we call God. Given a personal God of infinite power, justice, and benevolence, we not only may, but must, argue *à priori* to the possibility, at least, if not the probability, of some revelation of His will to man. Given the historical truth of the Mosaic Dispensation, we have such a revelation. Given certain other historical facts, upon some of which I shall presently touch, we have reason to believe that man received a revelation prior to that of the Mosaic Dispensation. If I may quote words of my own, written elsewhere, with regard especially to Hinduism viewed in con-

nexion with growth in religion, "A development there is; but is it a development upward, or a development downward (downward, I mean, as in the case of saint-worship and other deformities that have clustered round the design of the founder of Christianity)? It is not easy to see with Mr. Herbert Spencer by what law or necessity of man's nature he should, after having evolved his gods from the "stuff that dreams are made of," proceed to evolve the necessity for propitiating them with bloody sacrifices. Men do not propitiate each other, and I suppose, in no age ever even dreamed of doing so, with bloody offerings. Nor is it by any means easy to see with Mr. Moncure Conway how the struggle between the principles of "retaliation and forgiveness" in the human bosom could, according to his theory, beget the germ of the sacrificial system, and especially how it should have pointed out food animals and food plants as the only suitable offerings.

"The only natural law which the science of religion has forced upon my own conviction is, that man has exhibited a constant tendency to drop the spiritual out of religion, while he may retain the material. Deterioration from the original truth seems to have been the natural order of growth in religions. It was certainly so in the religion of Israel. It has been certainly so in the history of Christianity. The truth of the Founder has often been kept up only by an effort, and how often by a painful effort. I believe the same may be shown to be true of every known religion. But this does not mean utter destruction. Vestiges of the original will most probably remain, more or less extensive, more or less perfect. It is the spiritual that suffers; we more easily preserve the skeleton than the life that once animated it. And as regards concretions, just as, when we ascend the stream towards the fountain in Christianity, we drop sect after sect, heresy after heresy, so in Hinduism, when we march back to the Vedic era, we leave one by one the gods many and the lords many, till we reach a clearer atmosphere. When there, with a less incumbered realisation of deity, what do we find? We find what I take to be the most remarkable and noteworthy of all the results of our research, I mean, what is evidently the backbone of the religion, that has, moreover, existed to this day through all changes,—the Priest, the Altar, the Sacrifice, the Oblation, the Propitiation, the Sacred Feast, all connected with the acknowledgment of deity. Here, then, we must have reached the ideal, or a portion of the ideal, of original Hinduism. However imperfect and skeleton-like these

characteristics may seem, standing as they do now without a distinct and organised embodiment, without any defined reasons for their existence, yet they must point to the intrinsic nature of early Hinduism. Here we have certain marks of Hinduism, which are '*ubique, semper, ab omnibus.*' What is the true meaning of this? Are these well-defined characteristics only indications of a process of upward growth? which is the theory of Mr. Herbert Spencer; or are they vestiges of a former perfect organism already in a state of decay? If we see a building in an incomplete state, walls without a roof, portions of walls only indicative of what the walls ought to be; here a perfect window, there only a window-sill; here a door, there only a door-step; here a pillar, there only the base of a pillar, we must come to one of two inevitable conclusions,—either that the building is a ruin of a once perfect building, or that it is only in the state of construction. And so, if we were to see in different places portions of what appears to us to be evidently the same ideal, some more, some less complete, some conveying only suggestions of the ideal, some more nearly approaching it, we should conclude that all were either fragments of, or approximations towards, that one ideal. Now, comparative religion presents several so-called religions to us, having certain points of mutual contact, between some a few points, between others many, all pointing to one ideal. Does this mean that these several religions are each in a state of growth towards the ideal, or that the ideal now exists in many of them only in a state of ruin? This is, no doubt, the one vital question that, of all others, comparative religion has to solve. All the ancient religions had, to a greater or less degree, characteristics similar to those of the Hinduism of the Vedas,—priests, altars, sacrifices, propitiations. Can we refer all these to one ideal? We can. The ideal is seen in its completeness in the Mosaic Dispensation, which is doubtless a Divine reconstruction of a primeval revelation as to man's religions beliefs and duties. There these same parts have their proper places, functions, and appointments in a perfect system of divine worship. That dispensation is the restoration of an ideal upon which we could reconstruct the edifice of which these chief characteristics of Vedic Brahmanism, and other ancient religions, would be fitting parts. And certainly, when we find the *disjecta membra* of early religions, exactly such as we should expect to find in the ruins of such an ideal, we come very near to the proof that such an ideal did exist."

15. But to return to Buddhism. Even Dr. Oldenberg, whose

recent work on Buddha is the most scholarly and reliable that I have seen, when tracing the progress in Indian thought which prepared the way for Buddhism, depicts the Vedic religion as having been wholly philosophised, so to speak, out of the inner consciousness of the Hindu. Thus he finds disclosed in the "Brâhmana of the hundred paths,"* what the Vedic texts themselves, he says, fail to yield, "the genesis of the conception of the unity in all that is, from the first dim indications of this thought, until it attains a steady brilliancy." "What the Indian thinker has conceived in the particular 'ego,'—the Âtman [that is, himself],—extends in his idea, by inevitable necessity, to the universe at large beyond him: . . . . . the Âtman, the central substance of the 'ego,' steps forth on the domain of the bare human individual, and is taken as the creating power that moves the great body of the universe."† The man has thought out this idea so perfectly, that at last the "Âtman is called the Brahma." "Âtman and Brahma converge in the one, in which the yearning spirit, wearied of wandering in a world of gloomy, formless phantasms, finds its rest." So "the Brâhmana of the hundred paths" says, "That which was, that which will be, I praise, the great Brahma, the One, the Imperishable. To the Âtman let man bring his adoration, ... with this Âtman shall I, when I separate from this state, unite myself. Whosoever thinketh thus truly, there is no doubt." Then Dr. Oldenberg adds, "A new centre of thought is found, a new God, greater than all old gods, for he is the all; nearer to the quest of man's heart, for he is the particular 'ego.' The name of the thinker," Dr. Oldenberg goes on to say, "who was the first to propound this new philosophy, we know not."

16. In the margin of my copy of Dr. Oldenberg's book I wrote on reading this passage, "Or is this 'new God' the oldest of all?" I should venture to reverse the reasoning of Dr. Oldenberg here, and to find in the "Brâhmana of the hundred paths," and in the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, evidences of a religious thought, not constructive but destructive, not nearing the light, but receding from it, though still catching its last rays. Do we not rather see in the supreme Âtman,

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* Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 23, *et seq.*

† Though the original meaning of *Atman* is obscure, yet the more probable derivation is that which connects it with *an*, "to breathe," or *at*, "to go," than that which connects it with *aham*, the first personal pronoun. *Spiritus*, not *ego*, seems to be the underlying idea of *Atman*, even when used for "the self"; the original meaning seems to be still shadowed forth in the Greek ἀτμός.

the supreme Brahma, the supreme Prajāpati, the one Spirit or Individuality, the one Almighty, the one Lord, of Vedic Brahmanism, vestiges of a once purer faith and a truer worship? Certainly in reference to the theory of the evolutionists, there seems to be a higher differentiation in these teachings of the Vedic era, the one Infinite, Self-existent, Spirit, Creator, the Source and End of being, than in the one mere "Energy" of the present race of agnostics; just as the tree with stem, branches, leaves, fruit, is more highly differentiated than a mere pole. And none of these ideas of the deity can be charged with anthropomorphism. The theory of differentiation in the science of religion has, therefore, a somewhat difficult matter to explain, when investigating the religious beliefs of the Brahmans of ages long past. Moreover, Dr. Oldenberg has told us that, long before this discovery of the one Ātman, the sacrificial fire was everywhere present, as the great symbol of Aryan prosperity. They had sacrificed even to those "old gods," whom they had forgotten. So sovereign was the sacrificial system, that "the king,* whom the Brahmans anoint to rule over their people, is not their king; the priest, at the coronation, when he presents the ruler to his subjects, says, 'This is your king, O people; the king over us Brahmans is Soma.'" Whence, then, originated this idea of sacrifice? And what is that Soma libation again, but a vestige of the far past, the Hindu remembrance of the sacrificial cup, which their forefathers in the North had filled with the juice of the grape? Did man invent the priest, the altar, the sacrifice, the libation? It is impossible. We can only read the truth of this in the light of the Mosaic dispensation.†

17. Allow me to dwell, in a few hurried words, on the evidences of a primeval revelation from God. First, as to ritual worship. I will take only one example. The Hindu temple is on the same plan as the tabernacle in the Wilderness and Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, the fane consisting of two rooms, the inner one for the idol, the outer one for the priests' offices, and usually standing in a court of greater or less dimensions. Whence can the Hindus have derived this plan? It is scarcely possible that they can have borrowed this particular design from the Jews. I had long ago suspected that this also is a vestige of a ritual worship antecedent

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* Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 14.

† See this subject further discussed by me in *Pulpit Commentary* on *Leviticus, Introduction* on *Sacrifice*.

to the ritual of Moses; and this is confirmed by the discovery of the Sippara Temple by Mr. Rassam, which is also according to the same pattern. Why, then, was this pattern given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai? We can only conclude, I think, that Jehovah was then re-instituting a ritual that had become corrupted among the nations. And, if we carefully examine the Mosaic Dispensation, we shall find many circumstances to corroborate this. Many features of that dispensation already existed in the world; the priest was nothing new; the altar, the sacrifice, the sacrificial feast were nothing new; and, after Mr. Rassam's discovery of the Temple at Sippara, we can say with confidence the form of the tabernacle was nothing new. I have been led, therefore, to infer that the Mosaic Dispensation was a "Reformation," and, if so, there must have been a ritual and a worship that existed in earlier ages, appointed by the same Jehovah; and we can thus understand the priestly and sacrificial vestiges of a once divinely-appointed worship that are to be found, or were once to be found, not only in India, but, to a greater or less extent, all over the world.

18. We come, then, if I am right, to regard the Brahmanism of the Vedic era, with its priests, altars, temples, and sacrifices, as retaining divinely-appointed rites, appointed long before Moses, which in their origin can only now be correctly read in the after-light of the "Reformation," called the Mosaic Dispensation; but which had already become for the most part dead fossils of a past history, the only life that remained being the remembrance of the fact of the existence of the one Infinite (*Aditi*),* the one Supreme (*Brahma*), the one Creator (*Prajāpati*), the one Spirit (*Atma*), after whom some yearning spirits of men still sought, though they had lost his truth. Symbolism had crushed the life out of their religion. The sun, the moon, the heavens, the storms, the powers of nature, the sacrificial fire, the soma cup, first worshipped as manifestations of the divine presence, clouded the image of the personal Jehovah, and became at last only the veils of the Great Unknown.

19. Parallel with these recollections of a once divine worship must have been the recollections of a divinely-taught morality. If there were a divinely-appointed worship among the fathers of the nations, there must have been a divine code of duty also in reference both to God and man. There are vestiges here also. There are expressions in the *Rig Veda* in

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* See *Rig Veda*, Max Müller, vol. i., p. 230, *et seq.*

reference to duty to God, which seem to belong to a different atmosphere from the self-seeking which is prevalent. As, for example, in one of the hymns to the Maruts, or storm-gods, translated by Professor Max Müller, there is an expression which is rendered, "Thou searchest out *sin*," *rina-yavā*, the word *rina*, meaning really a *debt*, something owing to the deity: so also there is in other hymns *āgas*, *guilt*,—"O Agni, whatever sin [guilt, abomination] we have committed, do thou pardon it,"—ideas that could hardly belong to a constructive religion that had only reached the stage of nature-worship. And so in other instances in the Veda, where sin is conceived, in the words of Max Müller, "as a bond or chain, from which the repentant sinner wishes to be freed." *

20. But we are most concerned with the morality of Buddha. There is one especially remarkable parallel between what I believe to be early Buddhist teaching and what we find in Holy Scripture as a divine command. I refer to the ten precepts, or obligations, which have, no doubt, always formed, and still form, a very prominent feature in Buddhistic teaching. The order, as well as the character of the first four obligations, is particularly observable as compared with the second table of the commandments in the Mosaic law. The latter, beginning with the sixth, are against (1) murder, (2) adultery, (3) stealing, (4) false witness. The Buddhist precepts are against (1) killing (animal life included), (2) stealing, (3) adultery and impurity, (4) lying. These are nearly identical, the second and third only changing places. The fact of the Buddhist precepts being ten in number is also in itself suggestive, though the remaining six are very different from the rest of the Mosaic precepts, and are protests against the licentiousness of Buddha's day.† This striking parallelism

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* See *Rig Veda*, Max Müller, vol. i., p. 214, *et seq.*

† The ten precepts referred to are against,—

1. The taking of life.
2. Stealing.
3. Adultery and sexual intercourse.
4. Lying.
5. The use of intoxicating drinks.
6. The eating of food after mid-day.
7. The attendance upon dancing, singing, music, and masks.
8. The adorning of the body with flowers, and the use of perfumes and unguents.
9. The use of high or honourable seats or couches.
10. The receiving of gold or silver.

Every religious or moral movement is, in the first instance, either a protest against some error or abuse that has become intolerable, or an

between the four precepts quoted can hardly be accidental. It is, of course, not without the bounds of possibility that there may here be an echo of Moses, who lived 1,000 years before Buddha; but I should rather regard these first four precepts of the Buddhist code as being vestiges of a moral law divinely given in the still farther past, that had never been wholly lost to the human family, and had been re-enunciated to the "chosen people" on Mount Sinai. In this view of the case, Buddha inherited traditions of a morality that had once the stamp of the divine *imprimatur*. I am far from saying that there was only this inheritance at the root of Buddhistic teaching; but that inheritance, I think, I may claim; and, if the claim be allowed, it will go far to remove any difficulty as to the origin of parallelisms between the moral teaching of Buddha and that of the Old Testament.

21. Dr. Oldenberg labours eloquently to show that the seeds of Buddhism already existed in Brahmanism. No doubt, to some extent they did; and, by the side of the preserved relics of a divine ritual, why should there not have existed preserved relics of a divine morality? There was always the natural yearning of man after something better. The desire after deliverance, as Dr. Oldenberg has observed, already expresses itself in Hindnism. Buddhism takes up the theme, and discourses of self-conquest, merit, and demerit. Is it not here grasping as weapons the vestiges of an erewhile divine morality to hurl at the effete ritualism that was deadening the world, and as a protest against the shams and immorality of the day? The very fact of the doctrine, that deliverance from suffering by righteousness (this is Buddhism) ends in peace in another state of existence, must imply, in the first birth of the idea, some power to acknowledge the righteousness and award the peace. The very idea of merit and demerit, as earning or deserving, as binding or freeing, must originally arise from the conviction of an arbitrator. Causality, as Dr. Oldenberg has noticed, is everywhere implied, though not defined, in Buddhism, as we read it to-day. But an abstract idea like this could never have given the convictions which must be at the root originally of merit and demerit

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affirmation of some truth that has been denied or lost. The last six of these Buddhist precepts disclose the character of the age in which they were first promulgated, and against which they were a protest. It must have been an age calling loudly for reform; such an age as produced Juvenal's satires; an age of drunkenness, of gluttony, of frivolity, of effeminacy, of worldly pride, wealth, and avarice.

rewarded or punished. Indeed, the fact itself of a blind moral causality pervading Buddhism would seem to point to a something more real, which has dropped out of sight. Merit rewarded and demerit punished in a future state must be vestiges of a higher faith. When we add God and man's responsibility to God, the ruins are restored. Merit rewarded, demerit punished,—"thou shalt" and "thou shalt not,"—are natural parts of a divine law; as they stand in Buddhism, they are only fragments of the truth.

22. With regard, again, to the doctrine of *Nirvāna*, which Dr. Oldenberg's learned researches have further helped to remove out of the gloomy region of a blank annihilation, here also is something, if it did originally speak only of "deliverance" and "peace," that looks very like a vestige of such teaching as inspired other wise men to write, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace"; "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death"; "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."*

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* When we go back to the very earliest texts that speak of Nirvāna, we find the subject already involved in metaphysics. This is a certain proof that either the original dogmatic teaching on the subject had been lost, or was being perverted. Every original teacher is dogmatic; if on any portion of his teaching he himself runs into metaphysical questions, that means that he has inherited some tradition which he does not understand. In Buddha's own mouth was Nirvāna a circumscribed dogma? or was it a metaphysical uncertainty? One would suppose that it must have been with him a well-defined dogma, or it is difficult to see how it could become the one goal of all his teaching. The doctrine that the original dogma of Nirvāna was annihilation of being was unorthodox, though already broached, when the Samyutta Nikāya was written. There the following passage occurs (more fully quoted by Dr. Oldenberg, p. 282): "Thus then, friend Yamaka, even here in this world the Perfect One is not to be apprehended by thee in truth. Hast thou, therefore, a right to speak, saying, 'I understand the doctrine taught by the Exalted One to be this, that a monk, who is free from sin, when his body dissolves, is subject to annihilation, that he passes away, that he does not exist beyond death'?" Yamaka answers, "Such, indeed, was hitherto, friend Sāriputta, the heretical view which I ignorantly entertained. But now, when I hear the venerable Sāriputta expound the doctrine, the heretical view has lost its hold of me, and I have learned the doctrine." Echoes of the original teaching exist in the Pâli texts, of which the following are quoted by Dr. Oldenberg, as examples, from the Dhammapada (p. 285):—

"Plunged into meditation, the immovable ones who valiantly struggle evermore, the wise, grasp the Nirvāna, the gain which no other gain surpasses."

"Hunger is the most grievous illness; the Sankhāra are the most grievous sorrow; recognising this of a truth man attains the Nirvāna, the supreme happiness."

23. My attempt, then, has been to show, that the moral precepts of Buddha may have grown from relics, or vestiges, of a primitive, divinely-given, law, that still existed by the side of vestiges of divinely appointed religious rites and ceremonies. Whether Gautama Buddha himself held more than these fragments of the past it would be premature yet to say; but that many of the Buddhistic teachings are stray mosaics that would accurately fit a divine morality, however they came to be so, I think no one will be inclined to deny.

24. That there may have been, however, much more in the teaching of the actual founder of Buddhism than appears to-day in the Buddhist Scriptures, is quite possible. This thought appears to have struck Dr. Oldenberg with peculiar force. He says, "When we try to resuscitate in our own way and in our own language the thoughts that are embedded in the Buddhist teaching, we can scarcely help forming the impression that it was not a mere idle statement which the sacred texts preserve to us, that the Perfect One knew much more which he thought inadvisable to say, than what he esteemed it profitable to his disciples to unfold. For that which is declared points for its explanation and completion to something else, which is passed over in silence—for it

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"The wise, who cause no suffering to any being, who keep their body in check, they walk to the everlasting state; he who has reached that knows no sorrow."

"He who is permeated by goodness, the monk who adheres to Buddha's teaching, let him turn to the land of peace, where transientness finds an end, to happiness." ("Dhammapada," 23, 203, 225, 368).

Why meditation, endurance, wisdom, goodness, purity, love, if the goal of all were annihilation of being? Could such a prospect as the *summum bonum* have begotten the moral system of Buddha? There is no hint in the above extracts (and so in innumerable others) of annihilation of being. Deliverance from the transient is the ground thought.

The theory of Mr. Childers, though supported by so much learning, "that the word Nirvāna was used from the first to designate two different things, the state of blissful sanctification called Arhatship, and the annihilation of existence in which Arhatship ends" (Childers's Pāli Dictionary, p. 266), and that, therefore, it has always had the latter for its final meaning, will not stand, I think, the test of future criticism. Nay, Dr. Oldenberg seems already successfully to have set it aside.

If Gautama Buddha himself taught nothing more definite on the subject of Nirvāna than did his disciples, whose words we now read, then it is evident that he must have inherited his method of life without the fulness of its original sanction and source; and if so, he was not the founder, properly speaking, of a religion, but only the instrument for using an already existing morality against the imperfect state of society in which his lot was cast.

seemed not to serve for quietude, illumination, the Nirvāna—but of which we can scarcely help believing that it was really present in the minds of Buddha and those disciples to whom we owe the compilation of the dogmatic texts." Whether the reason for this "silence," or omission, is correctly surmised by Dr. Oldenberg, may be doubted; but the fact of something existing, though out of sight in the present records, is prominent in his mind.* This fact has also been elsewhere remarked on by myself. Had Gautama himself the more perfect knowledge? He lived in a remarkable age. What was the real force that roused at that time a keener sense of human sin and suffering, and a louder protest against moral evil all over the world? What was the real secret of the teaching of Pythagoras in Italy, of Zoroaster in Persia, of Lao-tse and Confucius in China, of Heraklitos in Ephesus, of the Orphic brotherhoods? What were those mysterious books that were brought by the Sibyl to Tarquinius Superbus? These questions remain unanswered. But that there was in that age, in which Gautama Buddha most probably lived, a powerful influence through the known world towards morality is evident. It is a curious question how far the influence, great and enduring as it was, of Daniel and his God-fearing companions at the court of the then kings of the earth, was an influence that may have been world-wide. Daniel was born, according to common chronologies, some time, perhaps twenty years, before 600 B.C., and therefore probably slightly preceded, or was, in advanced age, still living in the remarkable epoch to which Gautama seems to belong. One fact is certain, and that is, that whatever the lost Sibylline books were, one of the later ones contains passages so similar to some of Daniel's writings that most critics allow that the Sibyl had access to Daniel's prophecies. On the destruction of the earlier Sibylline Books by fire in the Temple of Jupiter B.C. 83, they were restored from public and private copies that existed in various towns of Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor. They were again similarly restored when burnt in the days of Nero, Julian, and Honorius. And the inference is, that the restorations most likely represented the true character, as well as in all probability some of the *ipsissima verba* of the originals. This question, however, of the Jews at Babylon having exerted a wider influence than is generally suspected,

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* Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 208.

is a matter not now to be dogmatized upon, though it may well be kept in mind as something worth investigation.

25. But, whatever the motive power that first roused Gautama Buddha to preach against immorality and Brahman ritualism, whether it came from without or was the inheritance only of tradition, it must be allowed that Buddhism was, in its subsequent development, essentially Indian, moulded chiefly by the natural disposition and philosophical speculations of the race, and subject, to a very great degree, to the isolation beneath the great barrier of the Himalayas, which has made India what it is; except when sometimes the invader, perhaps religious as well as military and mercantile, has found his way, like Alexander, through the Hindu Kush, or by the sea-board, like Solomon's sailors, and subsequent Persian, Arabian, Egyptian, and Jewish adventurers.

The Chairman (J. A. Fraser, M.D., Insp. Gen. of Hospitals).—I think there are very few persons present who can be without a deep sense of obligation to the author of this paper. The subject is one which has excited a great deal of attention and discussion both at home and abroad; we all know that by reason of certain works which have been written without, as I conceive, that thorough investigation of the subject which was demanded. We are, therefore, particularly glad to have a paper taking up this question so strongly and so learnedly. There is, I might almost say, a great tendency in the present day to advance and extol any religion except the Christian religion.

Captain Frank Petrie (Hon. Sec.).—Before the discussion commences, I have to mention the receipt of letters from several taking a special interest in the knowledge of Buddhism, expressing regret at not being able to be present; also a letter from Mr. Morley, the domestic chaplain to the Bishop of Madras, expressing his high appreciation of the value of the paper, which he hopes will reach the whole of India.

Mr. Hormuzd Rassam.—This has been a topic in which I have always been very much interested, and I cannot but say that I agree with everything the learned author of the paper has said with regard to the most ancient belief in the God of Revelation—Jehovah. Every time I try to trace the Religions of the world and its languages, I cannot go further than the history of the Jews. We can now look back to certain antiquities upon which we can depend,—not MSS. which are only ridiculously mentioned as having existed for thousands of years, which no one can trust, but antiquities in stone and terra cotta which have been discovered in Mesopotamia. For instance, in reference to my discovery at Balawat, namely, the bronze gates of Shalmaneser the Second. Assyrian scholars and I fix its date when Jonah visited Nineveh under the Divine

dictate. This monument shows that the Assyrians had the same sacrifices as the Jews. I have a photograph here of two sacrifices pictured on the gate, and you will find in it that the same animals are presented for sacrifice as are mentioned in Leviticus, chapter xvi., verse 3, wherein it is said, "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." Well, here it is, you will see it quite plainly on the bronze gates. We find that in those days the Kings of Assyria acted as high priests, and the same King Shalmaneser we find took tribute from Jehu, king of Israel, as an act of homage. It appears that there was a difference between the Assyrian and the Babylonian religions; it is now proved, after the recent discoveries, that the Babylonians who migrated from the Persian Gulf, had revolting and abominable sacrifices the same as there were in the land of Canaan,—that is to say, they sacrificed their children to idols. When we come to the Assyrians, we find that there was nothing of the kind in their worship, but they imitated the sacrifices of the Jewish rites. If we follow the history of the Jews, or even that of the Christian Church, we find that corruptions spread so much in them since the foundation of our faith, that we do not wonder that the same occurred, in a great measure, in countries like China and India, which used to be very uncivilised at one time. Without having the printing-press, they used merely to hear of certain good theological laws and imitate them; or, at any rate, they conformed to them as well as they could. I have often heard it said by the enemies of Christianity that Moses borrowed all his precepts and laws from the old gentiles or heathens. We may just as well believe the same of the Koran. We all know that the Koran is a corruption of the Old and New Testaments, and I do not think there is a man or even a child who does not know that the Koran was written by Mohammed in the seventh century (A.D. 610). In my opinion the worship of Jehovah was originally pure and simple, and that it so remained until the Church of God, the ancient Jewish Church, began to worship the creature rather than the Creator. We also know that Christianity was preached in India and China hundreds of years ago, and that the Assyrian Christians—the so-called Nestorians—preached in those countries about the sixth century: but they themselves go still further, and say that according to their traditions their missionaries preached there in the fourth century, when, as it is stated, they had no less than eighty bishops in China, India, and Tartary. We can well fancy, therefore, by looking back to the sixth century, and considering that the Christians who went out to those countries were able to Christianise thousands of those people, it is to be presumed that they must have left a good impression behind them of, at any rate, a part of the religion they professed. Let us, for example, take the Taepings as an illustration: we all know the man who headed the Taepings at that time was a nominal Christian, and held extraordinary views, and if he had succeeded

we should have had a very curious Christianity in China. So it is with the Buddhists and other Gentile nations who might have been like some Christians and Jews who have corrupted the worship of the true God, and followed their own devices.

Rev. S. Coles, M.A.—I have to thank Mr. Collins for his very able paper on a subject in which I feel the greatest interest. I may say that I have been a missionary in Ceylon for about four-and-twenty years, and during that time I made the Buddhist system of religion a special study, and am of opinion that, in order to understand Buddhism aright, we must endeavour to find out what was the state of society at the time and in the country in which Buddha lived, and what were the influences brought to bear on Buddhism from without. We understand, from the Buddhist books, that in the time of Buddha, society in India was pantheistic, and that caste during that period had so developed, especially in relation to the pretensions of the Brahmins, as to become absolutely unbearable to the soldiers and the kings. Buddhism, then, was evidently formulated or founded in order to correct these things; and Buddha, like most human reformers, when he set to work with the object of reforming pantheism, did this so effectually that he left no room for a deity in the religion he set up; and, instead of a deity, we find action in the abstract. Buddha was what may be called the king of pessimists. He looked upon all existence, all pleasure, and all human happiness as evil and undesirable, himself giving up, as we are told, the pleasures of the court and retiring into the jungle, whence, after seven years of meditation, he came forth as a teacher. He then said he would give only his own experience; that what he had learned he had learned by himself, that he had not derived it from any one else. This is repeatedly expressed in the Buddhist writings, which affirm that he had never received any of his teachings from any other source. If, however, we look at those teachings as they are given in his moral code, I do not think we need go very far to find their origin; for the first five of his commands are those which, we may say, are the common heritage of humanity. All races of people look on murder, theft, impurity, and falsehood as sins and actions that should be avoided. The other commands given in Buddha's code are such as we should expect a pessimist to put forward. They relate to abstinence from all pleasure; and this last portion of his commands was to be observed principally by the monks and nuns. Laymen might observe them if they chose, but they were not bound to do so. Then, as I have said, we must look to the connexion India had with other countries. Mr. Rassam has spoken of what has been discovered in Assyria; and here we should bear in mind that the Ten Tribes were carried into Assyria long before—quite a century before—Buddha was born. I think the Behestun inscriptions prove that the teachings of the Bible, or of the Old Testament, were carried to that part of the world; and in the Buddhist scriptures we find so many interesting facts and remarks similar to those

given in the Old Testament, that we cannot but think that the people of India derived a certain portion of them from the West,—we may say, from the Children of Israel. We are also told in this paper—and I think it is a fact that we ought to bear in mind—that about the time Buddha lived Daniel lived also, and that Judah had then been carried into captivity in Babylon. Therefore it will be seen that there were many means and opportunities by which India, at that remote period, could have obtained a certain amount of knowledge with regard to the things contained in the Bible But, in order to understand Buddhism, we must try to learn what was Buddha's teaching about man ; about his constitution and his nature ; and then we may arrive at some idea as to that which has been the cause of very much discussion, and which, probably, will continue to be so for a long time to come, namely, the great doctrine of Buddhism, called "Nirvāna." We cannot understand what is meant by this without knowing what Buddha taught about the nature of man. It is often asserted that Nirvāna only means deliverance from all evil—from all change. But those who have studied the matter are not in agreement on this point; at any rate, they who have studied it most do not generally agree in this assertion. Professor Childers has written a very able article on Nirvāna, and he shows, in a manner which I think is unanswerable, that there are two stages which have been looked on as Nirvāna; namely, one in which there is existence, and another in which there is no existence. He shows this most learnedly by using the two words which are found in the Buddhist scriptures, *saupādisesa Nibbāna* and *nirupādisesa Nibbāna*. The one is the Nirvāna, which has something in it, wherein the elements of being still exist, and then after death, there comes the nirupādisesa Nibbāna, in which there can be no existence after the powers of the body and mind are dissolved ; which I think is plain from Buddha's own words. It is very difficult to understand all Buddha's teachings about the nature of man, because many of them are self-contradictory ; but we may say that, when he speaks of man's higher nature, it is as of a procession, or, as I have been accustomed to call it, a sequence. There is nothing which you can point to and say, "This is really the higher part of man." He says, man and every creature in the universe consist of two parts—the nāma and the rupa. Rupa is the figure ; nāma is the name that is given. This is explained, according to Buddhist ideas, as being similar to a chariot. You have all the different portions of the chariot, and then you have the name. Buddha then says, "So is man. Man has a body, man has thoughts ; and these constitute what is the name, which you call, and think of as, man. But there is nothing which you can point to definitely as *ego* and say that that is permanent." This is illustrated, in another part of the Buddhist scriptures by a lamp. The lamp is lighted, and it goes on burning through the night. In the first watch there is a flame, and in the second there is a flame also. Is the flame in the second watch the same as in the first ? The answer given is that it is not the same, neither is it another. And Buddha says, "So it is with man : he is not the same,

neither is he another: there is a procession, or a sequence, following from this body and the action of the thoughts." It is very difficult to understand this matter; but it has, to a great extent, been elucidated by Dr. Oldenburg, and I can heartily recommend his book to those who have not read it. It is the most able book that has been written on Buddhism; and although we may not agree with all he asserts, yet the impression every impartial reader will derive is this—that Christianity is immensely superior to Buddhism; the teachings of our holy religion are far above what Buddha gives. I think we ought to bear this in mind. It has often been asked, "Why is it that Buddhism has had, and still has, such a hold on the human mind, when this mystic Nirvāna is its final goal—its *summum bonum*?" I think the only reply we can give to this question is, that all Buddhists now in the world, and all Buddhists who have been in the world since Buddha's time, have no hope of reaching Nirvāna. They tell us it is impossible to arrive at that state, and all the Buddhists now are as virtuous as they can be, in order, as Buddha teaches, that they may have greater happiness in the next birth—it may be in this world, it may be in the upper world, or it may be in the lower world; but they believe that no one has any hope of reaching Nirvāna. This, I think, is the reason why Buddhism is still the religion of so many millions of the human race.

Principal G. W. Leitner, M.A., Ph.D., LL.D. (Government College, Lahore). —The concluding words in Mr. Collins's lecture point to an inference to which, perhaps, full weight has not been given, and that is the inference to be derived from the invasion of India by Alexander, which is rightly described as having been "perhaps religious as well as military and mercantile." In my opinion it was even more than this; for, if we consult those authors who deal with Alexander's invasion, we shall find that his object, at any rate as it was believed to be by his contemporaries, was to spread Greek influence through Asia. It was with this object that he set out; and, although Arrian wrote a considerable time afterwards, he wrote, as we know, as accurately, perhaps, as any historian ever did; while even in Plutarch we find the same belief as that of Arrian crystallised in what he records, both as to the object and the success of Alexander, to which he not only refers incidentally, but makes special allusion to, in a speech which is entitled, "Regarding the Virtue and Good Fortune of Alexander," in having introduced, as it were, Europe into Asia, with particular reference to India. One of the passages is: Κατασπείρας Ἀσίαν Ἑλληνικοῖς τέλεσι. There were festivals, we are told, in which not only was the rivalry of physical force and skill displayed, but the rivalry also of the fine arts. We find that, when the soldiers rebelled on the off-side of the Punjaub,—that is to say, the side furthest from Greece and nearest to Hindostan,—they did so on the ground, among others, that, whereas they were taken there for the purpose of making the Asiatics Greek, they themselves were being turned into Asiatics: and it is quite clear that the word Asia, as there used, must have referred to India in general and to the Punjaub in particular, since it was there

that they spoke of their mission. But, beyond this, we have before us the actual sculptures produced at that period; and those who will take the trouble to visit the first and second rooms in the Indian section of the South Kensington Museum will be enabled to see how very strongly Greek influence did pervade those Buddhistic sculptures—for they certainly were Buddhistic—which were made on the Indian frontier. Therefore, I say, we cannot altogether eliminate Greek art from our calculations as to Buddhism, nor can we look upon the statements of the historians as referring to a section of the Hindoos rather than to the Buddhists, who, at the time of which we are speaking, ruled the Punjaub, the records being preserved in stone to this day. I may add, that this is further supported by the fact that actual Greek sculptures have been discovered. For instance, a Pallas Athene has been found side by side with undoubted Buddhistic carvings. This leads to the consideration that, after all, profound as are the scholars who have gone into the matter,—men like Mr. Davids and others,—and great as is the light they have thrown on it, this question of Buddhism offers so wide a field, that it would not suffer from any comparisons that might be brought from any other quarters to bear on what has been put forward and established by those who have examined the Buddhism of Ceylon, of Siam, and of Burmah. In what I may call the Greek Buddhism of the north of the Punjaub, we find the same influence which characterises the works of the Greeks. The superhuman is represented by the refined Human, and so also does the Buddhism of the period to which I allude in that part of India; already a point of difference from Brahminism, which always seeks to represent the supernatural by that which is most remote from the natural. For instance, the idea, say, of omniscience, which the Greeks would represent by a refined expression of the human face, the Brahmins represent by the use of many eyes, while for omnipotence they would employ many arms. And this leads us to the consideration generally of the representation of the supernatural, to which a mystic sense is attached in the Hindoo representations of the Deity that has not by any means been sufficiently explained; as, indeed, the question, who or what Brahma was, has by no means yet been taken out of the mist which surrounds it. Referring to my own travels, I may say that beyond the Buddhism, the accounts of which I read and admire in the writings of the scholars who have been named, there is the Buddhism of Thibet. We know what Huc and Gabet reported. They were two excellent men—Roman Catholic missionaries belonging to the order of the Jesuits—but, still, men of remarkable simplicity and goodness of mind, who record their impressions with the greatest clearness. These men were so struck with the similarity of the Buddhism they there saw with the Roman Catholic form of worship, that they thought the Evil Spirit had been at work there in order to bring their holy religion into contempt. I do not know whether this is throwing anything like a light, or a half-light, or even the faintest rush-light, on the point Mr. Collins has elucidated; but there is no doubt that, historically speaking, if we do not go into the remote and obscure past, the Christian missionaries and others who pene-

trated into those regions may, and, indeed, must, have left traces of their teaching in Thibet. Of course, if you go back to the Mosaic dispensation, or, as Mr. Collins has done, even further than that, the question resolves itself into what Mr. Collins has termed "the common heritage of mankind," with reference to the desire to get rid of sin and the importance of sacrificial offerings, and so forth ; but this rather leads us into the realms of the conjectural. Historically, no doubt, we can say there is sufficient proof that certain missionaries and numerous other Christians have been in Buddhistic Thibet, and have there shown their ritual and left some of it behind them. I remember very well being struck with the antiphonal singing in the monastery at Pugdal, in Zanskar, where Csoma de Körös, the illustrious and self-denying Hungarian traveller, had been successful in getting rid of the so-called Prayer-wheel worship and practice (although the terms worship and adoration are not quite suitable to the practice of the prayer-wheel), and where the Abbot had been so struck with the devotion of "the European disciple," who died before he could carry out his long-cherished intention of penetrating into Lhassa, that he offered to place his nephews as hostages in the hands of the British Government, and to take any European scholar anxious to go to Thibet to Lhassa, and to bring him back again,—an offer which, in my opinion, ought to have been accepted. I was there in 1866, but the Buddhists leave their traditions so vividly behind them that I should not be surprised to find, even after this lapse of time, that either the Abbot lived to carry out his promise, or that it would still be carried out by his successor, because he looked upon it as a sacred duty. I am not here to describe all the peculiarities of "the worship" adopted in that remarkable place ; but I may say that there is not the least doubt that in the red cardinal's cap, in the genuflexions, in the peculiar soldier-like salute, and in many other things (they differ much in their mode of adoration or admiration—which, perhaps, would be the more correct word), the Buddhists of Thibet are more like Europeans than any Asiatics I have seen elsewhere. In regard to their wonderful pantomimic representations of the struggles between virtue and vices of all kinds, the vices are shown as animals ; and doubtless these notions are derived not only from their surroundings, but also from other sources. With regard to annihilation,—there, again, we have to do with a complicated view of human nature, affected by ethnic and other considerations. One of the disciples at the monastery I have spoken of showed me, at a very early period of the year, over some of the snow-covered passes, and I entered into conversation with him. So long as he maintained his serenity of mind, "nothing was far" and "nothing was near." Even Sakiamuni (Buddha) was "nothing," but when I asked him, as he was carrying me across a mountain stream and had just been very nearly taken off his legs, whether that was nothing, he did not display his former readiness of answer. In the end he turned out to be very much like other human beings when he got rid of his difficulties, and, in spite of all his philosophy, he took out his flute and played a tune, and showed himself to be a very jolly

fellow. The complication in arriving at what the Buddhists may think about Nirvana is very great. In respect to the question of burial, in Thibet there are two modes, the terrestrial and the celestial; and in these they seem to show that they do not fear annihilation. The terrestrial burial is this: after the body has been burned the ashes are mixed with flour, on pieces of which, generally, an image of Buddha, and sometimes of the deceased person, is stamped, and these little effigies are distributed to the relatives, a proportion of them being placed in the mausoleum with the deceased, where they may afterwards be found. The celestial or superior mode is to have the body thrown to the dogs and devoured by them, so that the utmost contempt may be shown for this body; and I can quite conceive, without entering into the extremely difficult questions raised here, that a human being may be brought up to consider death almost in the light of a pleasure, but, at any rate, as a welcome deliverance from the troubles of life. Of course, it all very much depends on the way in which death is looked at, in contrast to the notion entertained by a restless, ambitious race, such as those of Europe, who are not satisfied with a general immortality, —a sort of mixture of one essence in the general essence,—but require an individual immortality. I can quite conceive that races brought up to look on death as an emancipation from evil may, perhaps, not fear death. This consideration, of course, does not enter into that most important and vital question which relates to what was intended by Buddha, or to what Buddhism really ought to be. I have merely to deal with the fact that here we have a race, who, as far as I have seen, are certainly inferior to none in actual honesty and goodness of heart, not fearing death to anything like the same extent as the far braver races who willingly confront death in Europe, and who, though they will thus meet and confront their fate, have, I think, a greater horror of death than the race of which I am speaking. I do not know whether I ought to say a few words about the pessimism of Buddha, as I ought, perhaps, to leave that to Mr. Davids and others. I myself consider that, perhaps, Buddha was not altogether such a pessimist as he is said to have been, nor that Schopenhauer is his apostle in Germany. With regard to Krishna, when I see the learning shown in these pages, it astonishes me that Mr. Collins should consider that the story of the god Krishna is a manifest parody of the history of Christ. Was not Krishna a living and popular prince, who has been elevated to the rank of a deity? And how far can we imagine that such erratic conduct as characterised Krishna in his dealings with the Gopis or milkmaids, can in any way be a parody of the history of Christ? We have to deal with a living prince of philanthropic tendencies, although these seem to have included one sex, rather than humanity generally,—one whose exploits are known and who afterwards was raised to the rank of a deity. Why should we consider that, whatever may have been the subsequent embellishments of what was attributed to the god Krishna, they were a manifest parody of the history of Christ? This deity has surely an historical basis. When, however,

Mr. Collins speaks of the influence of the Christians in India, I think there can be no doubt that he is right. In the Dabistan, a work that has not been sufficiently read, we find an account by an unknown author, so judicial in its character that it is impossible to say to what religion the writer belonged. It is suggested that he was a Shiah Mussulman. Nevertheless, we find plenty there about Christians. With regard to the inscriptions that have been spoken of, we find that there is one preserved in the Delhi Museum. There are other inscriptions elsewhere in Armenian, and plenty more in Pahlawi. So much about the influence of Christianity, if you move only within a limited range; but the moment you go to the region of conjecture, and consider how far Indian civilisation affected Greece, you have nothing but philology to depend on. History there ceases; whereas, when you say the Greeks have influenced India, history helps you on, for we know they have been there. Again when you say that Buddhism was prior to Christianity in its teaching, if you examine the matter and go to the facts, it is very difficult to show how far the disciples of Buddha went; although we know he sent them beyond the Himalayas. How far they may have affected the Alexandrine teaching is a matter which at once removes us from the sphere of the actual. But when you inquire, Did Christian missionaries go to Thibet? you find, as I have shown, that they did, and that they left a ritual behind them. It all depends on where you draw the line. Therefore, without presuming to decide a question on which so many learned doctors apparently disagree, I will say a few words about Buddha. Buddha, as you may know, is a word which is the same as But, the common Muhammedan word for idol; and typical idolatry, among the Arabs, was represented, not so much by idols as by putting forward the doctrine of the admiration of Buddha, whose image was represented more numerously, although only a revered teacher, than that of, perhaps, any other real idol in Asia. Consequently you find that you have, in the beginning of the eighth century, in the distant tribes of Arabia, the word But, as explaining what was idolatry to them. As to Brahma, I do not know whether it would be right for me to throw out the conjecture, that Brahma was never a really personal god. It was subsequently to the "abstraction" of Brahma that the single temple in India to that deity was built; such a god as Brahma could not have existed,—for this reason, that Brahma is the great human mind and yearning, and that this is represented primarily by the Brahmins as a corporate body, and then by a personification of that body. Italian has, by a curious coincidence, preserved the spirit of the word in "bramo,"—"I desire." What was meant by the word "Brahma"? In Brahminism you see asceticism, and are told that by study and the practice of a pure life, and by an acknowledgment of the evidences of sin, and by sacrifices—to which a remarkable reference has been made,—you can gradually rise to a position far above even that of the gods, because, by struggling with your own passions, and by having succeeded in subduing them, you have accomplished what you have had a yearning after all your life. In the personification of the

highest humanity, considering all the struggles you have had, you are made higher than the angels. Therefore, in my humble opinion, here you have one side of the question, which, perhaps, explains how it is that Brahma is not worshipped, and cannot be worshipped, inasmuch as he is only an abstraction of the yearning of the highest intelligence of the Hindoo race, as represented primarily by the Brahmins. We are now removed from the time when another view used to be taken of Brahma. I remember that when I was a boy I read a comparative mythology in which it was pointed out that Brahma was Abraham, and that this view was corroborated by the fact of Saraswati being his wife, this being held as pointing clearly to Abraham's wife Sarah, though I do not think that such a view would be accepted now. I do not wish to detain you much longer, but I will just give you an instance of how things become corrupted. There is a society in India which seeks to reconcile the Vedas with Science, so when the Vedas tell us: "Here the priest pours ghee into the fire," the passage is explained as denoting the constituents of air as scientifically laid down. So that, whether you call it a development of something higher or a retrogression, anyhow we find old sayings made use of to express modern ideas. I fear I have detained you a great deal too long, otherwise I would have called attention to another point. We are told in the paper that "if we see a building in an incomplete state, walls without a roof, portions of walls only indicative of what the walls ought to be—here a perfect window, there only a window-sill; here a door, there only a door-step; here a pillar, there only the base of a pillar,—we must come to one of two inevitable conclusions, either that the building is a ruin of a once perfect building, or that it is only in the state of construction." I remember, when I saw certain walls standing at a place where I had been making an unsuccessful exploration, I asked myself how it was that nothing had been found there, either by myself or by previous explorers, and yet there were walls still remaining and showing that we were confronted by the ruins of an ancient city. It was a mere accident which made me acquainted with the fact that we had been all the time *on the roofs* of the buildings, and that, just as people very rarely put their images on the roofs of their houses, and just as they are not to be found in the streets, but in the buildings themselves, there might be this explanation of the mystery, namely, that the earth had come in and filled up the intervals by landslips, as it evidently did, and had left the roofs standing. Might not this be also an illustration, though not, perhaps, a very happy one, of what has occurred in the case we are considering? May it not be that here we have the fabric of a worship which may be traced back, as Mr. Collins has very rightly said, to some higher inspiration, and that something analogous to the landslips I have spoken of have occurred in this unfortunate India and the surrounding countries, driving out what was there before and filling up the vacant space, the result being that it only requires the labours of men like Mr. Collins and others now in this room, to clear out the earth that has fallen, and restore

the buildings to a condition that will at least give us some idea of their origin, construction, and intention?

Professor T. W. Rhys Davids.—I have listened with great pleasure to Mr. Collins's instructive paper. I am very glad to see that now Mr. Collins, whom I recollect when I was in Ceylon, is here in England, he has not forgotten what he learned when he was in that part of the world, but is able to bring questions such as this before the Victoria Institute. The question he has dwelt with to-night is, however, one of such magnitude, that it is absolutely impossible to do full justice to it within the short limits of such a paper as he could place before you, or in any speech that could be made upon it. I can only advert to the remarks I have made in my Hibbert lectures on this subject. As Mr. Collins has pointed out, there are two great elements of resemblance between Buddhism and Christianity. The first is the resemblance of the legends of Buddha, in a great many instances, to the stories in the apocryphal gospels, as well as, in some cases, to the gospels themselves. The second is the question of morality. I am sorry Mr. Collins has taken up Bunsen's work on the first point, because that is—and there I entirely agree with him—an entirely uncritical production. I think it would have been far better if he had taken Professor Seydel's work. In it he draws attention in an elaborate way to all these resemblances, and arrives at the conclusion that the Christians have borrowed from the Buddhists. I, for one, confess that I do not think so. The evidence of the bringing over of the Buddhist beliefs to Europe at the time the gospels were put into their present form is exceedingly slight, and I do not think it ever really took place. On this, as on the second point, I am more inclined to adopt the opinion put forward by Mr Coles, that such resemblances as are to be discovered are due to the moral notions found in both religions being the common heritage of mankind. When we find that the Buddhists have five commandments which greatly resemble the commandments of the Old Testament, I do not think it is at all necessary to suppose that either of them is borrowed from the other. I think it quite possible to suppose that the two ideas are due to entirely independent origins. I have noted one or two things on which I differ from Mr. Collins. One principal point is with regard to the Vedas. I was astonished to find Mr. Collins saying that, the further you go back in history, the clearer the atmosphere becomes, until you get into a realm of literature in which you find yourself grappling with the ritual and sacrifices of the priests in the temples. The fact is that in the Vedas there is no mention of temples or of priests, and I do not think there is any mention of ritual. In the books written after the Vedas there is, no doubt, considerable mention of ritual; but this is not to be found in the Vedas themselves. The priesthood was in an entirely unformed condition, and the worship practised was that of an immense number of gods. With regard to the monotheism or pantheism summed up in the worship of Brahma, the idea was long behind the rest. It is not found at all in

the ancient Vedas. With regard to "Tathāgata," the real meaning is "Thus Come." It is the name of Buddha, and simply means "the one who came, like other prophets before him." Like every great prophet who has appeared in the world, he put forth that he came to fulfil, not to destroy, the law, and he was the successor of previous Buddhas, and therefore called himself Tathāgata. I think Dr. Oldenberg is rather a dangerous authority for Mr. Collins to quote. I know him very well, and my impression is that he would not quite support the views that have been attributed to him. With regard to Nirvâna, that is a very simple matter. If every one would recollect the example Mr. Coles has given with regard to the chariot and the lamp, the matter would become more clear. We cannot call it rightly actual annihilation, because there is nothing to annihilate. What Mr. Coles has said is accurate, and Nirvâna means a state of perfection to be reached here on earth. The Buddhists did not believe in the existence of a soul, and to suppose that Nirvâna means the annihilation of the soul, is, therefore, a mistake. I have only to add, that what Dr. Leitner has said about Greek and other European influence in India in later Buddhism, touches on a most interesting point. No one can look at the Buddhist sculptures without seeing that they are sculptures in which Greek influence is clearly and distinctly shown, although they are, undoubtedly, Buddhistic works; and we all know that Tibetan Buddhism owes a good deal to Christianity. Mr. Tylor, of Oxford, has shown a number of different rosaries from different parts of the world, Mahommedan and Buddhistic. These are curious, as showing how exactly similar all the rosaries are. He holds that those rosaries were, probably, Buddhistic in their origin, and were, perhaps, brought over and adopted by the Mahommedans, and also by the Christians in Europe.* In the same way, no doubt, various other beliefs and customs have been carried over from Europe to the East.

The Author.—There have been so many subjects touched upon by the different speakers, that it would be almost impossible, at this late hour, to reply to the greater part of what has been said. I will, however, just refer to what Mr. Rhys Davids has advanced. It seems that he and I must regard the Vedas from different points of view. It is quite true that we read nothing about temples in the Rig Veda. But there was probably no reason for naming them. The application of the word "ritual" may be misunderstood. The Vedic hymns do not, indeed, prescribe ritual; that would be foreign to their character; but they disclose rites which imply ritual; there is the altar, the sacrifice, the sacrificer or priest, the sacred fire, the oblation, especially the soma-libation; and all connected with the ideas of prayer, propitiation, and sometimes even the forgiveness of sins. And the

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* Their existence in the East is first mentioned A.D. 366. The R.C. Rosary of 55 beads was introduced by Peter the Hermit, A.D. 1090; the larger Rosary was invented by Dominic de Guzman, A.D. 1202.—Ed.

Brāhmanas comment on the ritual implied. We find in the Vedic era, a worship of deity under the powers of nature. We are in a different atmosphere from that which surrounds Krishna, Rāma, Ganapathi, Hanumān, and even Vishnu, and the other more popular gods and goddesses. We are, most perceptibly, nearer to the early principles of Tsabaism, which was, doubtless, the first departure from the worship of the one true God. With reference to what Mr. Coles has said, I am quite sure he has read a good deal more about Buddhism than I have; and he is, no doubt, a much better authority than I. But it would appear that Mr. Coles describes what is the Buddhism of to-day. He would take, as I gather from his words, the whole of the Buddhist scriptures and tell you what Buddhism now is. We, however, know that. But the question really is, what was the Buddhism of Gautama Buddha himself? It should be remembered that no Buddhist book was written within four hundred years of Buddha's death. That, at least, is the tradition of the Singhalese people themselves, and it is probably correct. What we want to know is, what Buddha himself really taught. That is the point, and there lies the difficulty. I only desired to elucidate one point to-night, and that is, that whether we take Hinduism, Buddhism, or any other religion, they did not spring originally from men's thoughts, but from Revelation; and the differences between them are some slight indication of the extent to which that primitive revelation has been overlaid by man's invention.

The meeting was then adjourned.

KRISHNA.

The author of the Paper has since forwarded the following supplementary remarks:—

With regard to Krishna, it may be quite true, as Mr. Rhys Davids says, that the legends may have gathered round some real hero or prince, as in the case of Buddha himself. But the question is as to the origin of the legends. The comparatively modern character of the books in which Krishna is raised to divine honours will be conceded, if not insisted upon, by all Sanscrit scholars. The Bhagavat-Gīta, with the Purānas, is placed by Professor Max Müller in what he calls the "modern and artificial period," or, as he also calls it, the "Renaissance" period, commencing not earlier than the third century of the Christian Era. The Bhāgavata-Purāna, in the tenth book of which is the full story of Krishna, is held by many scholars to have been written as late as the tenth century A.D. In the Bhagavat-Gīta, of which the opinion of Mr. Monier Williams is, that it is "really a comparatively modern philosophical poem interpolated in the Bhīshma-parva," the great peculiarity is the later Hindu doctrine of *bhakti*, faith, or devotion. It is the same in the story of Krishna in the Bhāgavata Purāna. In the latter it is declared that to *hear the story* of Krishna *and to believe* is all that is required for salvation (*mōksha*). Faith is the theme throughout. It is also said that, sin having come into the world, the Deity resolved to become in-

carnate in the person of Krishna. The very names are peculiar: the tribe to which Krishna belongs is that of Yadu: it is true that Yadu is mentioned in the Rig Veda (i. 174-9) as the brother of Turvasu; but it is impossible not to observe the similarity between Yadu and *Yahuda*. Krishna's father's name is Vasudeva: *Vasu* in the Vedas means, good, or rich; it was also the appellation of certain semi-divine beings: *deva*, of course, means merely divine. The real mother of Krishna was Devakī, the meaning of which is divine woman. There may be nothing in these singular approximations, perhaps, if they are taken alone; but there are so many suggestions of the probable influence of the gospel story in the Purāna and the Mahā-Bhārata, that they become worth considering. There is the story of the slaying of the infants by the tyrant king Kansa at the birth of Krishna, a king whose name may mean "lust," if it be derived as some suppose from *Kam*, and whom it was a part of Krishna's mission to destroy. On Krishna's birth he was put into a basket for winnowing rice—suggestive of the manger. To escape Kansa he is taken by his father to Gōkula, which means, literally, cow-house; but many have connected it with the Egyptian word "Goshen." As Krishna grows up he is tempted, and at last overthrows a great serpent, upon whose head he treads "assuming the weight of three worlds." This serpent, which generally figures in the Hindu representations of Krishna, is thus introduced at the commencement of the story: Parīkshit was the king of the men of the present age, and had become liable to a curse by throwing the skin of a snake upon a holy sage, and was therefore sentenced to die in seven days by the bite of an infernal serpent. To this Parīkshit (the word means tried, proved, tested) the story of Krishna is related in the Bhāgavata-Purāna. These certainly look very like parodies of the histories in the Bible of the fall of man, and the triumph of Jesus. But it would be impossible here to quote a tithe of the incidents in the history of Krishna suggestive of the Christian story. His saying that "They who love him shall never see death"; the conquest of Indra, the god of the air; the sheltering the men of Braj from Indra's deluge of rain by the mountain which he holds up on the tip of his finger, which mountain his followers are to worship; his being met as he enters Mathurâ by a deformed woman, who anoints him with sandal-wood oil, and his making her straight and beautiful; his raising a widow's son to life, as related in the Mahā-Bhārata; his once washing the feet of those present at a great sacrifice; his final descent into Hades, and rescuing certain persons from the dead:—these are certainly sufficiently striking. But the most notable part of all is the character of the Bhagavat-gīta, a poem which so struck Warren Hastings that in a letter written, now nearly a century ago, in October, 1784, he spoke of it as a "single exception, among all the known religions of mankind, of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation." It is not quite this: but the doctrines of the unity of God, and of redemption through an incarnation, are its themes. Of course, Krishna is the incarnate Redeemer, and thus he speaks:—"Supreme happiness attendeth the man whose mind is at peace, whose carnal affection and passions are subdued, who is thus *in God* and free from sin." "He my servant is dear to me who is free from enmity, the friend of all, merciful . . . . and whose mind and understanding are *fixed on me alone*," and so in numberless other passages. Stranger than all, perhaps, is the conclusion of the story, which is that Dwarka, "the city of many gates," which Krishna built on the western point of Guzerat, and where he and his followers repaired, was overwhelmed in the sea, so that not only the city, but the whole of the *family* and *descendants* of Krishna perished for ever from off the face of the earth. There may be here, no doubt, a recol-

lection of volcanic disturbances, which have even in the present century affected the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Katch : a similar overwhelming of Gokarna on the Malabar coast, and its restoration by Parasu-Rāma, is related in a copy of the Brahmānda-Purāna which I obtained in South India many years ago : and probably volcanic action was known in past times on the Western coast. But why should everything connected with the earthly history of Krishna end thus abruptly? It is noticeable that Krishna is the last recorded Avatāra of Vishnu ; one more Avatāra, the tenth, is to come under the name of Kalki, who will destroy the wicked, and liberate the world from its enemies, putting an end to the present *Kali-yuga*, or iron age of vice.

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